

basis of information, including sanction reports, from the following sources:

(1) The PRO or other quality assurance organization under contract with a State Medicaid plan for the area served by the HMO or competitive medical plan;

(2) State or local licensing or certification authorities;

(3) Fiscal agents or contractors, or private insurance companies;

(4) State or local professional societies;

(5) HCFA's HMO compliance office; or

(6) Any other sources deemed appropriate by the OIG.

(c) *Length of exclusion.* (1) An exclusion imposed in accordance with this section will be for a period of 3 years, unless aggravating or mitigating factors set forth in paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section form a basis for lengthening or shortening the period.

(2) Any of the following factors may be considered aggravating and a basis for lengthening the period of exclusion—

(i) The entity failed to provide a large number or a variety of items or services;

(ii) The failures occurred over a lengthy period of time;

(iii) The entity's failure to provide a necessary item or service that had or could have had a serious adverse effect;

(iv) Whether the individual or entity has a documented history of criminal, civil or administrative wrongdoing; or

(v) The individual or entity has been the subject of any other adverse action by any Federal, State or local government agency or board, if the adverse action is based on the same set of circumstances that serves as the basis for the imposition of the exclusion.

(3) Only the following factors may be considered as mitigating and a basis for reducing the period of exclusion—

(i) There were few violations and they occurred over a short period of time; or

(ii) Alternative sources of the type of health care items or services furnished by the entity are not available.

(iii) The entity took corrective action upon learning of impermissible activities by an employee or contractor.

[57 FR 3330, Jan. 29, 1992, as amended at 63 FR 46688, Sept. 2, 1998]

§ 1001.901 False or improper claims.

(a) *Circumstance for exclusion.* The OIG may exclude any individual or entity that it determines has committed an act described in section 1128A of the Act. The imposition of a civil money penalty or assessment is not a prerequisite for an exclusion under this section.

(b) *Length of exclusion.* In determining the length of an exclusion imposed in accordance with this section, the OIG will consider the following factors—

(1) The nature and circumstances surrounding the actions that are the basis for liability, including the period of time over which the acts occurred, the number of acts, whether there is evidence of a pattern and the amount claimed;

(2) The degree of culpability;

(3) Whether the individual or entity has a documented history of criminal, civil or administrative wrongdoing (The lack of any prior record is to be considered neutral);

(4) The individual or entity has been the subject of any other adverse action by any Federal, State or local government agency or board, if the adverse action is based on the same set of circumstances that serves as the basis for the imposition of the exclusion; or

(5) Other matters as justice may require.

[57 FR 3330, Jan. 29, 1992, as amended at 63 FR 46689, Sept. 2, 1998]

§ 1001.951 Fraud and kickbacks and other prohibited activities.

(a) *Circumstance for exclusion.* (1) Except as provided for in paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section, the OIG may exclude any individual or entity that it determines has committed an act described in section 1128B(b) of the Act.

(2) With respect to acts described in section 1128B of the Act, the OIG—

(i) May exclude any individual or entity that it determines has knowingly and willfully solicited, received, offered

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or paid any remuneration in the manner and for the purposes described therein, irrespective of whether the individual or entity may be able to prove that the remuneration was also intended for some other purpose; and

(ii) Will not exclude any individual or entity if that individual or entity can prove that the remuneration that is the subject of the exclusion is exempted from serving as the basis for an exclusion.

(b) *Length of exclusion.* (1) The following factors will be considered in determining the length of exclusion in accordance with this section—

(i) The nature and circumstances of the acts and other similar acts;

(ii) The nature and extent of any adverse physical, mental, financial or other impact the conduct had on program beneficiaries or other individuals or the Medicare or State health programs;

(iii) Whether the individual or entity has a documented history of criminal, civil or administrative wrongdoing (The lack of any prior record is to be considered neutral);

(iv) The individual or entity has been the subject of any other adverse action by any Federal, State or local government agency or board, if the adverse action is based on the same set of circumstances that serves as the basis for the imposition of the exclusion; or

(v) Any other facts bearing on the nature and seriousness of the individual's or entity's misconduct.

(2) It will be considered a mitigating factor if—

(i) The individual had a documented mental, emotional, or physical condition before or during the commission of the prohibited act(s) that reduced the individual's culpability for the acts in question;

(ii) The individual's or entity's cooperation with Federal or State officials resulted in the—

(A) Sanctioning of other individuals or entities, or

(B) Imposition of a civil money penalty against others; or

(iii) Alternative sources of the type of health care items or services pro-

vided by the individual or entity are not available.

[57 FR 3330, Jan. 29, 1992, as amended at 63 FR 46689, Sept. 2, 1998]

§ 1001.952 Exceptions.

The following payment practices shall not be treated as a criminal offense under section 1128B of the Act and shall not serve as the basis for an exclusion:

(a) *Investment Interests.* As used in section 1128B of the Act, "remuneration" does not include any payment that is a return on an investment interest, such as a dividend or interest income, made to an investor as long as all of the applicable standards are met within one of the following two categories of entities:

(1) If, within the previous fiscal year or previous 12 month period, the entity possesses more than \$50,000,000 in undepreciated net tangible assets (based on the net acquisition cost of purchasing such assets from an unrelated entity) related to the furnishing of items and services, all of the following five applicable standards must be met—

(i) With respect to an investment interest that is an equity security, the equity security must be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission under 15 U.S.C. 781 (b) or (g).

(ii) The investment interest of an investor in a position to make or influence referrals to, furnish items or services to, or otherwise generate business for the entity must be obtained on terms equally available to the public through trading on a registered national securities exchange, such as the New York Stock Exchange or the American Stock Exchange, or on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System.

(iii) The entity or any investor must not market or furnish the entity's items or services (or those of another entity as part of a cross referral agreement) to passive investors differently than to non-investors.

(iv) The entity must not loan funds to or guarantee a loan for an investor who is in a position to make or influence referrals to, furnish items or services to, or otherwise generate business for the entity if the investor uses any